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Community support grows for new Brentwood library

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BRENTWOOD -- From its conception three months ago, the Brentwood Library Foundation has hoped that Brentwood-area residents would be eager to support the building a new community library. So far, the enthusiasm is spreading.

The foundation's coming-out event, planned for Sept. 5, sold out quickly, and there is a growing wait list. The debut fundraising event will be a Murder Mystery Dinner at the Shadow Lakes Event Center.

"I'm surprised and pleased with the response we've seen," said foundation secretary and Friends of the Brentwood Library President Diane Alexander.

The foundation was created earlier this year to raise money for a new library in downtown Brentwood at the site of the current library at 104 Oak St. It is a nonprofit organization aimed at leading the fundraising campaign with the assistance of the city and Friends of the Brentwood Library.

"Individuals have a chance to leave their mark on the community facility that will be passed on to generations to come," said foundation Vice President Bryan Scott. "You don't build a library every year."

In late June, the City Council approved final conceptual designs for the future library building. The proposed 20,000-square-foot building would feature a secured outdoor reading garden, community room, a spacious children's area, story time room and natural elements mirroring the Brentwood Civic Center across the street.

The new library is being planned to best meet the needs of Brentwood and surrounding communities as they continue to grow, Scott said.

"We have thought about the future and standards as the city grows," he said.

The foundation board consists of retired residents, teachers and stay-at-home moms. Scott noted that it is a good mix of residents, including people who have library experience.

The upcoming event will feature entertainment from Murder on the Menu, a professional theatrical group. There will be a buffet, silent auction including books by local authors, prizes and a no-host bar.

Many local merchants and individuals have also donated items for the event, Scott said. Plans for the foundation's next event are still in the works, and it has not determined how much it plans to raise in the campaign, but there also will be outreach to local corporations.

The city had budgeted \$2.3 million for the library project because it was initially going to be a remodel and expansion of the existing facility. The library is estimated to cost \$10 million.

"There is great support in the community," Scott said.

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